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Agenda item 3

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

Work Programme [1]

Pursuant to "A New Partnership for Development: The Cartagena Commitment", adopted at the eighth session of the Conference, and on the basis of Board decision 398(XXXVIII) which sets out in Section B of the annex the terms of reference of the Standing Committee on Commodities, the Committee agreed on the following work programme for the period up to the next session of the Conference.

A. Situation and prospects for commodities

1. Identification and analysis of factors affecting commodity markets with a view, inter alia, to reducing distortions;

2. Analysis of ways and means to improve market opportunities for commodities in the medium term;

3. Analysis of national experiences in order to identify sound, compatible and consistent policies at national and international levels; and

4. Analysis of the evolution of prices and trade.

[1] As adopted by the Standing Committee on Commodities at its 5th (closing) meeting on 23 October 1992.

B. Contribution to the improvement of the functioning of commodity markets

1. Identification of ways to improve market transparency, inter alia, through improved information and statistics;

2. Identification of ways to strengthen producer/consumer cooperation;

3. Identification and analysis of ways and means to remove barriers to trade in commodities, including those based on environmental considerations; and

4. Analysis of ways of improving the efficiency and use of existing mechanisms for the management of risks arising from commodity price fluctuations.

C. Compensatory financing mechanisms

1. Analysis of problems stemming from commodity-related export earnings shortfalls of developing countries and review of developments in the field of compensatory financing of export earnings shortfalls.

D. Reducing excessive dependence on primary commodities

1. Analysis of national experiences in horizontal and vertical diversification, including the possibilities for crop substitution;

2. Examination of the best ways of achieving diversification, taking into account competitiveness, market trends and opportunities; and

3. Identification of ways aimed at enhancing cooperation for institution building, promotion of entrepreneurship and diversification, including crop substitution.

E. Fostering sustainable development in the commodity field

1. Analysis of national experiences in the management of natural resources with regard to commodity production;

2. Exploration of the links between commodity policies, use and management of natural resources and sustainable development;

3. Identification of environmental problems that are specific to commodity production and processing and an examination of ways of improving developing countries' access to international financial and technical support, including environmentally sound technologies to cope with such problems;

4. Identification of means by which the competitiveness of natural products with environmental advantages could be improved; and

5. Examination of the manner in which prices of natural commodities and their synthetic competitors could reflect environmental costs.

F. Technical cooperation in the field of commodities

1. Identification for consideration of areas in which technical cooperation should be strengthened.